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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of New York).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
February 14, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHRIS COLLINS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

STRONG LEADERSHIP AND MEANINGFUL REFORMS ARE NEEDED

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Oklahoma (Mr. MULLIN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MULLIN. I began running a business when I was only 20 years old. Back then, if you worked hard and followed the rules, you had a pretty good shot at getting ahead. Today, it seems the deck is increasingly stacked against those who work hard and pursue their own dreams, especially if you're a business owner.

More and more, businesses are faced with consistent uncertainty caused by

Washington's inability to take action on today's pressing problems. The failure of uncertainty, with tax rates near chaos in the markets and a never-ending stream of impractical regulations, is a cloud of doubt that has been cast over the entire economy. For most business owners, it is a daily struggle just to keep the doors open in large part because the government itself is a consistent obstacle.

The National Federation of Independent Businesses recently released figures from December indicating the mood of businesses is at a recession level. Seventy percent of business owners that were surveyed identified the current environment as a bad time to expand, and political uncertainty topped the list for the reasons not to attempt economic growth.

Lee Buddrus, a resident of Muskogee, Oklahoma, and president of Acme Engineering & Manufacturing Corporation, told me that a lot of small businesses are struggling just because they had to go in debt to stay afloat during the recession. Mr. Buddrus went on to tell me, "Now they're not able to make the kind of money they need to to pay down their debts," due in large part to the environment the government has created.

As a freshman Member, I join a small group of Members in Congress who have owned a business. I have felt the weight of the current hostile business climate and faced unprecedented difficulties in ensuring my business succeeded. I step on the floor of the United States House of Representatives with a firsthand understanding of how high the hurdles are for a business to succeed and just simply jump over.

Last month, when President Obama was sworn in to his second term, I was reminded of something he said 4 years ago, in his first inauguration. The President said:

The question we ask today is not whether our government is too big or too small, but

whether it works—whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified.

Unfortunately, all we have seen from this President is reckless spending and heavy-handed regulation.

At the time of the President's first inauguration, the national unemployment rate was 7.8 percent. At the time of his second inauguration, it was exactly the same, and this month unemployment rose to 7.9 percent. While the rate of unemployment has been mostly stagnant, the national debt has not. In the past 4 years of failed Obama policies, the Nation has added \$6 trillion of new debt onto the backs of citizens and businesses. Today, our national debt stands at \$16.4 trillion. Broken down by American citizens, that's \$52,210 for every man, woman, and child in this country.

We must get back on the right track and bring optimism into the business climate. First, we must pull back some of the regulations that bind the hands of our Nation's job creators. Second, Congress must make the difficult decisions we were elected to make and restrain government spending. Businesses cannot grow or expand in a climate of higher interest rates and higher taxes. Third, we have to be about creating a job-friendly environment.

I came to Congress as a businessman who simply got fed up with the government hindering my ability to create jobs. My mission every day is to make it easier for businesses to start to expand and to be successful.

In business, we know first you must face a problem honestly and then come up with real solutions that actually solve the problem. The economic policy of government trying to spend its way to prosperity has failed. Those of us in business know it's the private sector that creates real jobs, not the government.

Strong leadership and meaningful reforms are needed to move the looming

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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